

Capstone Project Course: Capstone Course Syllabus

The Rhode Island Skills Commission

Explanation and Considerations for Use

The Rhode Island Skills Commission developed this overview of a capstone course syllabus. It includes core questions, instructor strategies, details on the role of advisors, and presentation guidelines. This is only an example of one approach to designing and describing exhibition courses.

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**CERTIFICATE OF INITIAL MASTERY
CAPSTONE PROJECT COURSE**

CAPSTONE COURSE SYLLABUS

Included in this syllabus is a list of suggested activities. It is expected that teachers may use their own techniques for these strategies.

Note: The syllabus for this course meets the requirement for Rhode Island College Early Enrollment Placement (EEP) credit.

Overall introduction

This course is viewed as a support system for credit with very specific requirements. It may take a student longer to complete the capstone product for the CIM.

- What is the Certificate of Initial Mastery?
- What is a Capstone Project?
- How does completion of a Capstone Project fulfill one of Rhode Island's graduation by proficiency requirements?
- What are the minimum requirements for a student to earn Early Enrollment credit in this course?

Exploring interests and issues

- Start with issues, why they are worth knowing, anything controversial about the issue.
- Proceed from Interest to Issue to Core Question.
- Suggested activities:
 - Model the process with a school-based issue and inquiry.
 - How would you find out?
 - Where would you get the information?
 - Who should you talk to?
 - Divide this activity up and send students out to get the information.
 - Interest Activity
 - List five of your interests and rank them
 - Next, turn the top three into questions.
 - Use Inspiration software or other mind mapping techniques to develop these interests

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Core Questions

- Types of questions
- Reference list of sample student core questions.– a list of sample questions and issues for teachers is attached. It is suggested that these not be shown to students, since it is important for them to brainstorm using their own interest.
- Asking essential questions packet (Big 6)
- CIM manual examples and explanation
- One-on-one conferencing with student for core question
- Any additional teaching strategies found in teacher binder.

Orientation to Standards and PBGRs (if applicable)

- Why use standards to develop a capstone product?
- Provide one theme or model for all students to make connections to. Suggestion: Go back to “school issue model” from exploring interests and look at standards addressed in that particular issue.
- **Applied Learning Standards:**
 - orientation for all students
 - individual conferencing as needed
- **Content Standards**
 - E2 – NSPS English Writing standard orientation and conferencing. This includes the elements of writing narrative reports, response to literature, reflective and persuasive essays, etc. and conferencing.
 - Grade Span Expectations for ELA (and Math where applicable)
 - Individual student’s content standards (specific to his/her capstone project) and conferencing
 - Connecting core questions to specific standards and conferencing
 - Information and Technology literacy and standards and conferencing
 - Connecting with Advisor to determine appropriate content standards

Research Process

Teachers may utilize the following strategies to develop research skills

- Big 6 process
- Annotated bibliographies
- Citation of sources using MLA format
- Writing outlines
- Note-taking techniques/note cards
- A minimum of 7 quality annotated resources

Student work should meet the expectations of the attached Pilot Research Rubric.

Selection of Capstone Advisor

- Criteria for advisor (See Capstone Manual)
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- Sample Advisor contract
- Roles and responsibilities of advisor (refer to Capstone advisor timeline in manual)
- Capstone Advisor's log
- Advisor and student sign off on proposal

School to Career/mentoring/community outreach

- Explanation of role of mentor.
- Students are encouraged to establish contact with an outside mentor wherever possible. It is understood that some contacts would be made through the Web.
- The School to Career coordinator for each district should serve as a contact for students.
- Virtual Volunteering Project: this is a good site for mentor connections.
www.serviceleader.org/vv is the site address. Another resource is the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA on the web).

Drafting the Capstone Proposal

Teachers should instruct students to refer to Capstone manual and include the following in their proposal:

- Applied learning standards, content standards, and Grade Span Expectations
- Application of the standards selected in their own words
- Narrow and appropriate focus

Creating Timelines

- Working backwards to create the timeline
- Refer to sample in binder

Finalizing the Capstone Proposal

- Students will be exposed to types of instruction to allow students to write good proposals.
- Students need to assure they have answered the Core Question in their project
- Students should have all of the basic components and templates of the manual available in electronic form.

Expectations for reflective journal entries

- Orientation to reflective writing (refer to samples in binder)
- Discussion of sample journals (refer to CIM manual and other samples)

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- Journals should focus on problem solving such as obstacles encountered and how they were addressed. Journals should not be a summary of what was discussed in class on a specific day.

Rubrics from CIM manual for Capstone Product

- Oral presentation rubric
- Appropriate Applied Learning standards (especially AL 1, depending upon student selection of a,b, or c).
- Content/Product rubric

Presentation Process

- *Instruction on oral presentation strategies*
 - Students should practice presentations with peer and advisor feedback.
 - Outsiders such as mentors and parents may be invited for these presentations.
 - Mirror review techniques.
 - Self evaluation.
 - Modeling: viewing and critiquing previous Capstone presentations using CIM oral presentation rubrics.
 - Exposure to different presentation settings.
 - Perfect Presentations: good resource.
- Instruction on techniques using technology in presentations (refer to power point sheets)
- Practice presentations, using appropriate rubrics with peer evaluation/feedback
- Practice using the core question as the guiding focus of the presentation Invite advisors and stakeholders to practices for feedback
- Instruction on using note cards or power point to supplement presentations
- Preparing presentation folders for final CIM capstone presentation

Reflective narrative guidelines

- Refer to Reflective narrative guidelines and rubric in CIM manual

Presentation of Product

- Presentation before members of the Capstone class, invited guests, and judges.
- This presentation must meet standard to fulfill the requirement for the EEP. It may also fulfill the requirement for the CIM.